



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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No. 02-115

September 30, 2002

NRC AMENDS REGULATION ON UNLIKELY EVENTS AT POTENTIAL WASTE REPOSITORY

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is amending its regulations regarding a potential nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain, Nevada, to set out numerical values for deciding when a geological, hydrological or climatological feature, event or process is unlikely and therefore need not be considered in determining whether the repository would meet radiation dose standards for groundwater protection and human intrusion in NRC's regulations.

Unlikely events would still have to be considered in determining whether the repository would meet the overall 15-millirem radiation dose limit for protection of individuals.

Environmental Protection Agency standards, adopted by the NRC, require naturally occurring "unlikely" features, events, and processes or sequences of processes (such as volcanoes) to be excluded from determining compliance with radiation dose standards for groundwater protection and human intrusion (for example, if someone drills into the repository).

The new NRC regulation defines "unlikely" as having less than a 10 percent chance of occurring within 10,000 years of waste disposal.

A proposed rule on this subject was published in the Federal Register for public comment on January 25. No changes were made as a result of the comments received, and the Commission decided to finalize the rule as originally proposed.

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